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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Initial reports of States parties

Addendum

SLOVAKIA*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

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UPDATE
OF THE INITIAL REPORT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC ON THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was signed on July 17, 1980 on behalf of the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic /hereinafter SSR/. The Federal Assembly of SSR gave its consent and the Convention was subsequently ratified by the President of SSR with the reservation, that, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Article 29 of the Convention, SSR was not bound by its Paragraph 1 of Article 29. The opinion of SSR was, that eventual disputes on interpretation or implementation of this Convention, should be resolved by eventual negotiation between the parties to a dispute eventually by other means mutually agreed upon by the disputing parties. Instrument of ratification was deposited with the UN Secretary General, Convention Depository, on February 16, 1982. In accordance with the provisions of Article 27, Paragraph 1, the Convention entered into force in respect of SSR on March 18, 1982. The text of the Convention had been promulgated by the Decree of Ministry of Foreign Affairs published in the Code of Laws in 1987 under No. 62.

As a result of succession to the obligations of the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (formerly Czechoslovak Socialist Republic/ Czechoslovak Republic) the Slovak Republic became a party to the Convention by notification of May 28 with effect from January 1, 1993.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 18 of the Convention, the Slovak Republic, as a party to the aforementioned international legal document, is obliged to submit to the Secretary General of the United Nations a report on measures adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention, and on the progress made in this respect. According to this obligation, an initial report was prepared and presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women, for consideration.

In 1995 the initial report on removal of all forms of discrimination of women was prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in co-operation with other competent departments (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Health). Relevant comments concerning the report were also presented by non governmental organizations active in women rights issues.

Initial report and its current update were prepared in accordance with the UN manual's recommendations concerning the content and the form of individual initial reports on the UN conventions on international human and legal issues.

STATE AND LEGISLATIVE POWER IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The Slovak Republic was established on January 1, 1993 in accordance with the Constitutional Act No. 542/1992 Coll. on the termination of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Establishment of the Slovak Republic was preceded by issuing of Declaration of Slovak National Council on Sovereignty of the Slovak Republic from December 3, 1992.

The Slovak Republic is a parliamentary republic. Its territory is unitary and inseparable. According to Article 2 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (Act No. 460/1992 Coll.) state power originates from citizens who exercise it through their elected representatives, or directly. The state authorities can act only in accordance with the Constitution, within its limits and extent and in a way prescribed by the law. Anyone can act in a way, which is not prohibited by law and no one can be forced to act in a way, not prescribed by law.

The Slovak Constitution is based on theory of triple division of state power. It regulates the activity, position and structure of highest authorities of state power and supervision-National Council of the Slovak Republic, President of the Slovak Republic, Government of the Slovak Republic, Courts, Public Prosecutor Office and Supreme Inspection Office of the Slovak Republic. The system of checks and balances of legislative, executive and judicial power establishes the legal framework of democratic functioning of the state.

The legislative power is, according to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (Article 72 and following), vested in the Parliament - National Council of the Slovak Republic, which is a single chamber authority composed of 150 Members of Parliament elected for a four-years term. The Members of Parliament exercise their mandate personally in accordance with their conscience and conviction and are not bound by orders of a political party or movement on behalf of which they ran in the elections (so called prohibition of imperative mandate).

The position of the President of the Slovak Republic as a head of state, corresponds to the principal of parliamentary republic. Three fifth majority of votes of all Members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic is necessary to elect the President. The President is elected for a five-years term.

The highest authority of executive power is the Government of the Slovak Republic. The Prime Minister, as well as members of the Government, are appointed and recalled by the President of the Slovak Republic. The Government is responsible for execution of its functions to the National Council which can express no confidence. National Council can express no confidence also to individual members of the Slovak Government.

The Courts of the Slovak Republic are independent and impartial. The judges are bound only by law and, if stipulated by the Constitution or by the law, also by an international treaty. No state authority or other entity can therefore interfere with this independence of courts.

The system of courts in the Slovak Republic is the following: District Courts, Regional Courts, The Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, Military District Courts , Higher Military Court.

The constitutional issues are decided by the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, which is an independent judicial authority for the protection of constitutionality, which decides on compliance of:

- the laws with the Constitution and constitutional laws,
- Government regulations, generally binding legislation of Ministries and other central state authorities with the Constitution and constitutional laws and laws,
- generally binding legislation of local self-administration with the Constitution and laws,
- generally binding legislation of local authorities of state administration with the Constitution, laws and other generally binding legislation,
- generally binding legislation with international treaties promulgated in a manner prescribed for the promulgation of the laws.

The Constitutional Court also decides on disputes concerning competence between the central authorities of state administration, when the law does not provide for other authority to decide, interprets the Constitution, if the matter is disputable, decides on complaint against the decision of confirmation or non-confirmation of a mandate of member of the Slovak National Council, on compliance with Constitution and laws of elections for NC SR and self-administration authorities, on complaints against the result of a referendum, etc.

From the view of consequent compliance and protection of human rights, the Constitutional Court is also authorized do decide on constitutional complaint and motion to start proceedings, claiming violation of rights. The Constitutional Court of SR decides on complaints against valid decisions of central authorities of state administration, local authorities of state administration and local authorities of self-administration, by which the basic rights and freedoms of citizens were violated, if no other court is authorized to decide on the protection of these rights and freedoms (according to Act 99/1963 Coll. on civil court proceedings regarding to later legislation, general courts examine certain decisions of administrative authorities). Apart from the obligation to start action (if requested at least by one fifth of MPs of the National Council, President, Government, Court, General Prosecutor, anyone, whose right should be examined according to a constitutional complaint), The Constitutional Court may start to proceed also upon initiation of juridical or natural persons, if they claim violation of their rights.

PROTECTION OF BASIC RIGHTS AND HUMAN FREEDOMS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

In connection with the establishment of the Slovak Republic, a special attention had been devoted to the securing of continuity and stability of legal order, as the basic condition for the stability of state institutions and respect for human rights. The constitutional laws, laws and other generally

binding legislation remain in force in the country, if they are not in contradiction with the Constitution (Article 152, Par. 1 of the Constitution).

The Slovak legislative order included all the basic norms, which guarantee democracy, rule of law, human rights and freedoms, including international conventions, whose contractual party was the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic at the date of its termination. Apart from other agreements, the Slovak Republic had succeeded into UN human rights conventions - Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (promulgated under No. 32/1955 Coll.), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (No. 95/1974 Coll.), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (No. 120/76 Coll.), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (No.20/1976 Coll.), Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (No. 169/1991 Coll.), Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity (No. 53/1974 Coll.), International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (No. 116/1976 Coll.), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (No. 62/1987 Coll.), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (No. 143/1988 Coll.) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (No. 104/1991 Coll.).

According to Article 11 of the Constitution, international treaties on human rights and basic freedoms, which were ratified by the Slovak Republic and were promulgated in a manner provided by the law, are superior to its laws, if they provide for a larger extent of basic rights and freedoms.

Fundamental rights and freedoms in Slovakia are constitutionally protected. The legal order respects equality of citizens before the law and provides them all equal protection. Article 12, par. 2 of Slovak Constitution stipulates, that basic rights and freedoms are guaranteed on the territory of the Slovak Republic to all individuals, without regard to sex, race, colour, language, faith and religion, political or other thinking, national or social origin, membership to nationality or ethnic group, property, birth or other status. Nobody can be preferred or disadvantaged on these grounds. This fact is confirmed also by Articles 47, par. 2 and 3 of the Slovak Constitution, which guarantee, that „everyone is entitled to legal assistance in proceedings before courts, other state institutions or authorities of state administration from the beginning of the proceedings under conditions stipulated by the law".
Membership of Slovakia in the Council of Europe and succession into the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms established the authority of the European Court for Human Rights and the European Commission for Human Rights in Strasbourg. If required conditions were fulfilled, the Convention makes it possible for any individual, non governmental organization or group of individuals, who consider themselves to be a victim of violation of specific rights which were recognized by the state-party, to address their complaint to the European Commission for Human Rights and, when procedural rules are fulfilled, the European Court for Human Rights can decide. Succession into the 1st Optional Protocol to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights established the authority of the Commission for Human Rights to act in matters concerning protection of rights and freedoms of individuals subject to the jurisdiction of Slovakia.

SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMICAL OUTLINE

According to data of the Slovak Statistical Office , by the end of 1997, Slovakia had 5 387 700 inhabitants, from that 51.3% were women, i. e. they were 948 men to 1000 women.

Natural growth of population in 1997 represented 7 thousand persons and rate of natural growth achieved 1.3 per thousand. In the year 1997, 59 thousand children were born, which represents 11.0 per thousand per mean number of population. In comparison with the year 1989, when 80.1 thousand children were born, the rate of live born individuals decreased by 4.2 of per thousand points. In the year 1997, 52 thousand persons have died, which is -1.9 thousand less than in the year 1989. In comparison with the year 1989 the mortality rate decreased by -0.5 of per thousand points. Growth of population due to migration in the year 1997 represented 0.3%. While until the year 1993, the Slovak Republic was loosing population due to migration, in the years 1993 - 97 by surplus migration Slovakia gained together 13 400 inhabitants.

Together with the decrease of the number of newly born, also the age composition of population changes in favour of higher age groups. While in the year 1991 population under 15 years represented 24.6%, in the year 1996 it was only 21.7%. In 1991 population in productive age represented 58.1%, in 1993 their portion grew to 59.1% and in 1996 up to 60.7%. In 1996, 76.4% were economically active from total number of population in productive age.

Portion of inhabitants above 5 years of age also gradually increased, when in 1991 it represented 10.4% and in 1996 it was already 11.1%.

The most numerous age group in 1996 was the group of 10-24 year oldies, which represented 25.3% and further of 33-34 year oldies, with the portion of 22.6% of all the population, when in 1991 it was 10.4% and in 1996 already 11.1%. This was reflected in permanent increase of aging index (number of persons above 65 years per 100 persons between 0-14 years), which in 1991 represented 42.4% and in 1996 already 51.3%.

In 1996 the average age of Slovak population reached so far absolutely highest value of 34.8 years, 33.3 years for men and 36.3 years for women (in 1991 it was 32.2 years for men, 35.1 years for women and 33.7 years for both sexes).

Decrease of overall mortality especially for infants and neonates was demonstrated in prolonged mean life expectancy, which in 1996 reached 68.8 years for men, which is by 2.2 years more compared with 1991 and for the same period, there was increase by 1.2 years for women to 76.6 years.

Demographic picture and sociological research demonstrate, that marriage and family preserved a high status. Majority of adults enter marriage at least once (from adult inhabitant above 15 years of age, less than 20% are not married, from men above 20 years, only 17.98% are not married and only 10.43% of women), majority of women become mothers (voluntary refusal is exceptional in case of unwed women) and majority of children is born in marriage (approx. 90%). Especially in comparison with western countries, people who enter marriage are very young. Slovakia is typical for low marriage age and for low age of mothers at delivery of the first child. The time difference between marriage and birth of first child is very small - marriage age and average age of first birth are almost identical. Annually more than 50% of first children born in marriage are delivered before 9 months from marriage. This also indicates a high rate of premarital conceptions, which belongs to other specifics.

Deliveries of two children prevail, taking place relatively fast after each other. Reproduction period of our women is short and is concluded rather soon - majority of children are born to women in the age between 20 - 24 years and delivery after 30 years of age is rare.

These long term characteristics of birth and marriage rate have the following consequences: faster exchange of generations, younger grandparents, gradual stabilization of two child model, reduction of sibling relations and smaller difference in age of siblings, decrease of number of members of nuclear family - horizontal narrowing of families and vertical extension of families (increased number of generations - by grand - grandparents).

This is also reflected in resulting structure of families and households. Family households prevail, which at the last census in 1991 represented 77.8% of all 1 832 484 registered households. Absolute majority goes with complete families - 86.6%. Incomplete family households represent 13.4% of all families and 10.4% of all households. The rest are households of individuals (21.8%) and other non-family households. Largest portion of family households with dependent children is represented by two-child families - 46.2%. Single-child families represent 33.5%, but in this case there is the possibility of another child, since these are mostly young families. There is an ongoing decrease of number of families with more children. Their number is lower by 3% compared with the year 1980.

Family is the most universal form of peoples lives. In fact, 80% of people live currently in Slovakia in some form of family, rest are lonely living people, for whom it is, however, only a certain stage of life, before establishment or disintegration of their own family. Only less, than 1% of people (precisely 0,4%), live in some form of non-family household.

In recent years certain family behaviour starts to be apparent with part of young people. It is more based on personal responsibility and choice of own life route. Its first demonstrations can be found in the demographic processes and family development in the recent years. There is an increase of average age in entering the marriage, family planning is becoming popular, number of abortions decreases and portion of children born outside marriage grows. However, the most significant event is the increase of age limit, when young people wish to have a child.

Slovakia still belongs to the countries with high economical activity of women, as well as countries with high employment of women.

High level of participation of women in labour force in changed economical conditions is probably due to factors with more dimensions, such as: traditionally high esteem of labour in value system of women, economical necessity due to persistent double-income model of the family, attitude to work, not only as source of income, but also as sphere for social contacts and self-realization.

The analysis of statistical data indicates, that quantitative dimension of employment of women did not change significantly - women represent an important segment of labour force. There is also an internal differentiation according to education and qualification, character of work and place of residence.

Economical activity of population reached in 1997 59.5% in average (men 67.6%, women 52.0%). Number of economically active population in recent years grew with a slower pace than the number of citizens in economically active age, therefore there was a decrease of economical activity of population. This was mainly due to decrease of economical activity of population in post-productive age, also due to mild growth of involvement of youth in vocational training and studies. Such a development was within specific years determined by various groups of inhabitants. In the first years after 1989 the development was affected especially by decrease of economical activity of population in post-productive age, in further years decrease of economical activity of individual age groups developed more proportionally. The statistic rate of economical activity of population had been also affected by methodological changes connected with gradual transition to internationally compatible statistical data.

In 1997, country had in average 2 481 100 economically active inhabitants (labour force sources), of that 45.4% women (1 127 600 persons). From economically active population, the employed represented 88.4%, which is by 0.5 per cent point less than in 1996.

Highest rate of economical activity in longer term development (years 1994 -1997) is achieved by women in age groups 40 - 44 years (89.3% from living women in this age group in 1997), 35 - 39 years (88.9%), 45 - 49 years (88.0%). Significantly high level of economical activity is also typical for women in age groups 25 - 29 years (72.3%) and 30 - 34 years (81.1%). Significant difference between the economical activity of men and women is demonstrated in age group 55 -59 years (earlier retirement age of women).

High level of economical engagement of women is closely related to their level of education. Almost 11% of women from total number of economically active women have university education (men 11.1%), more than 46% have full secondary education with school leaving certificate (Men 31%), 28.5% with apprenticeship (men 46%) and 13.8% of women have elementary education (men11.2%).

ANNEX TO THE TEXT OF THE INITIAL REPORT OF SLOVAKIA OF 1995

It can be stated, that principles anchored in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women are fully included in the Slovak Constitution.

Since 1995, when the Initial report concerning the Convention on removal of all forms of discrimination of women was sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations for consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women, the Slovak Government adopted a number of proposed new laws or amendments of laws with the goal of gradual forming of new structure.

The present annex contains information on changes in legislation and accepted measures, which occurred in the legal system as compared with the year 1995, eventually partial overview of those in stage of preparation. Significant changes occurred in the field of employment.

To Article 2 of the Convention:

Constitutional right of employees (same for women as men) to a free choice the profession, as well as to preparation for it, right to do business and perform other earning activity, right to work and to adequate material compensation in case of loss of employment or no possibility to be employed and right to fair and satisfactory work conditions are regulated by the Laws of the Slovak Republic, namely:

- Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 387/1996 Coll. on employment, as amended
- Act No. 65/1965 Coll. - Labour Code, as amended
- Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 330/1996 Coll. on security and health protection at work
- Act No. 1/1992 Coll. on wage, remuneration for standby at work and average wage, as amended
- Act No. 143/1992 Coll. on salary and remuneration for standby at work in state budgetary and some other organizations and institutions, as amended
- Act No. 2/1991 Coll. on collective bargaining, as amended

The Laws of Slovakia regulating specific fields of basic economical and social rights also contain sanction provisions in the form of fines to employers for non compliance with legal regulations, eventually up to removal of license for business activity.

The right to social security is guaranteed by the Slovak Constitution.

According to Article 39, Par. 1 and 2, citizens are entitled to adequate material provision in high age and when incapable to work, as well as in case of loss of a bread-winner. Everyone in material need is entitled to such assistance, which is necessary to provide the basic living conditions.

According to Article 41, Par. 5 of the Constitution, parents taking care of children are entitled to assistance of State.

Basic legal provisions regulating individual parts of social security are the following:

- Act No. 54/1956 Coll. on sickness insurance of employees, as amended
- Act No. 88/1968 Coll. on prolonged maternal leave, on maternal benefits and benefits for children from sickness insurance, as amended
- Act No. 100/1998 Coll. on social security, as amended
- Act No. 463/1991 Coll. on minimum support, as amended
- Act of the National Council No. 193/1994 Coll. on child benefits and additional child benefits according to the Act of NC SR No. 134/1995 Coll.

System of social security is composed of:

- sickness insurance
- pension security
- additional pension insurance of employees
- social care
- state social benefits

According to the valid legislative situation, the provision of benefits in the field of social security is bound to citizen principle as opposed to principle of differentiation according to sex. The stated principle based on the Constitution is implemented in the field of social security by the Act No. 100/1998 on social security according to subsequent regulations as basic legal provision regulating conditions of entitlement to benefits and services of social security as well as by other legislative provisions regulating individual parts of social security.

To Article 2, letter e) of the Convention:

Any acts and practices discriminating against women are in contradiction with the Constitution, therefore neither companies, organizations, nor persons may accept measures, which would be discriminative against women. On the contrary, it is possible within company trade union organizations, to accept measures for extraordinary protection of women in the work process.

To Article 2, letter f) of the Convention:

The Slovak legislation is permanently under expert scrutiny, and so far no discriminative paragraphs were identified, which would require change or abolition of existing acts or regulations.

To Article 2, letter g) of the Convention:

The Slovak penal legislative norms (Penal Code, Code on Criminal Proceedings, Act on the execution of penitentiary penalty, Act on the execution of Custody) do not obtain any provisions, which would discriminate against women in time of preparatory proceedings, proceedings before court, eventually in time of execution of a penalty.

To Article 3 of the Convention:

Requirement to accept legislative measures to provide full development and encouragement of women with the aim to secure them full exercise and use of human rights and basic freedoms based on equality is secured within the whole criminal proceedings, as well as in the course of penitentiary punishment. Special regulations of conditions of execution of a penitentiary penalty for women are contained in detail in the Act on the execution of penitentiary penalty and Order of execution of penitentiary penalty, which exclude any form of discrimination.

In order to improve the conditions and overall position of women, there are active non-governmental women organizations, also in mutual co-operation with the government sector.

In the years 1991 -1992 there existed a Governmental Committee for Women and Family, which had the authority to comment on Government materials concerning the problems of women, families and to propose to the Government, eventually to individual departments certain measures, but had no budget of its own, which would enable its own more detailed professional work. This committee closely co-operated with women's non-governmental organizations. After the elections in 1992, this governmental committee was abolished and the authorities in the sphere of family were transferred to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

In March 1996 a Co-ordination Committee for the Problems of Women (hereinafter named CCPW) started its activity under the auspices of the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, as an advisory, co-ordinating and initiative authority of the Slovak Government for issues concerning the position and interests of women in all spheres of life.

Members of CCPW are parliamentary representatives, non-governmental women's organizations, trade unions, self-administration, central authorities of state administration, research institutions, churches and experts working on problems of women, children and family.

The Minister of Labour, social affairs and family was the Chairwoman of the CCPW until April 1st 1998 . The post of Deputy Chairwoman was occupied by the representative of Slovak Trade Unions.

CCPW contributes mainly to resolution of issues connected with the position and problems of women, children, youth and family in the society, as well as the legislation in this area.

The positions of CCPW have character of recommendations for the Slovak Government concerning the issues of overall improvement of position of women and their equal opportunities.

Main goals and priorities of CCPW are the following:

1) To exercise co-ordination among sectors in preparation of materials and opinions for the Slovak Government concerning the questions of women.
2) To participate on preparation of Government measures for securing of adequate position of women in the society.
3) To devote attention to the woman within family and in education of children, according to biological specifics of women´s organism and motherhood, to protection of woman - mother, protection of the family and children.
4) To devote attention to equal position of women in politics, cultural and economical sphere, to inform the public about the existence of international documents on equal position of women, on rights of children etc. and about their current processing according to the conditions.
5) To present to governmental meetings the program and concepts following the solution of principal social problems of women and to express opinion on their social urgency and chronological procedure.
6) To propose specific measures and conclusions concerning the problems of women.

CCPW works in four expert work groups, which are involved in current problems concerning women, children and family:

- Expert work group for the sphere of employment resolves questions concerning the equal position of women and men on labour market and problems of legislation in the sphere of employment concentrated on problems of women.
- Expert work group for the field of social and population policy works on matters concerning the implementation of the concept of state family policy, issues of social and health security, demographic policy.
- Expert work group for the social, political and foreign issues sphere works on matters concerning participation of Slovakia in international conventions in the sphere of equality of women and men, as well as participation of women in political positions and in decision making sphere.
- Expert work group for legislative and legal sphere works on issues of equality in currently valid legal regulations, as well as the legislation under preparation and issues of legislation concerning women, children and family.

Apart from the network of information and knowledge regularly exchanged and mediated by the members of CCPW, they resolve specific problems concerning the position of women within the expert work groups.

In the course of 1997 the members of CCPW produced a program document with the goal to improve the position of women in individual UN countries - National Action Plan for Women in Slovakia. Slovakia agreed to work out this document following up to the conclusions of the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing. The members of CCPW produced a thorough analysis of position of women in various spheres of life (employment, social policy, social security, health, criminality, medial sphere, non-governmental women´s organisations, internal and foreign policy related to women, etc.) and according to this analysis, they proposed specific measures for solution of existing problems in the span of 10 years. At its meeting on September 16. 1997 the

Government approved the National Action Plan for Women, where it took over the auspices for implementation of individual measures with active participation of non-governmental organizations.

Each priority includes several measures. The proposed solutions in individual priorities of the National Action Plan for Women, after implementation, may generally help to improve the situation in the field of employment, birth, social and health care.

Within one of the priorities of the Slovak Government in the field of equality of women and men „Practical implementation of equal position of woman in the family, employment and society, anchored within the legislative system", it is considered to support the establishment of the institution of an „ombudsman", concentrated on the enhanced support of protection of human rights in all areas.

One of other important initiatives of CCPW is the establishment of the Gender Centre based in Bratislava. The Gender Centre for equal treatment of women and men is a national project financed by the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the state budget. Part of this program is also the effort to implement equal approach to both women and men, which is included in all of UN activities and is an important element of transformation process of this important world organization.

Building of the Gender Centres in the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries is a part of the Action Plan for Women, approved at the UN World Conference on Women in 1996.

The Gender Centre in Slovakia has a status of a non-profit organization, indirectly connected to some of the ministries through its executive board. Its mission is to work as an information and co-ordination centre.

CCPW organizes and participates at many events - seminars, conferences and workshops in the country and abroad.

The members of CCPW represented Slovakia as the members of the delegations at 41st and 42nd sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, where at 42nd session a member of CCPW was elected as the Vice-Chairperson to the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women for 2-year period.

Apart from CCPW, also the Parliamentary Commission for Women of the Committee of the Slovak National Council for Health and Social affairs, is involved in the sphere of women´s rights. It was established in 1996 and its role is the support of interests of women within the parliamentary discussions.

Also the Confederation of Trade Unions of Slovakia (CTU), constituted within its structures an advisory authority named the Committee of CTU for women as of December 17, 1991, which is a voluntary association of female representatives of member trade unions of CTU. The Committee is chaired by an elected chairwoman, who is simultaneously also a statutory representative of CTU in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Brussels.

To Article 4, Par. 1 of the Convention:

The equal position of men and women is guaranteed by the Constitution and is reflected in all the laws regulating the political, economical, social and cultural sphere. Slovakia did not need to implement temporary and special measures in order to accelerate the establishment of equal position of women and men.

To Article 4, Par. 2 of the Convention:

According to the provision of the Act on execution of penitentiary punishment, this punishment is excluded for pregnant women and women, taking care of their own child younger than one year.

Special provisions focused mainly on the protection of motherhood are expressed in the Article 11. It is especially the protection before the conclusion of employment, suitable arrangement of working hours, inclusion of the period of care for a child under 5 years of age for the purposes of unemployment insurance.

According to the legislative provision concerning the pension benefits and sickness insurance, women are not discriminated in the conditions for entitlement to individual benefits of pension security and sickness insurance, on the contrary, they are entitled to more favourable conditions than men in certain cases.

Employed women performing work, which is prohibited to pregnant women, or which threatens their pregnancy according to medical assessment, and are, therefore in the period of pregnancy and in the period up to 9 months after delivery temporarily transferred to other work, where they receive lower earnings, without their fault, are provided with compensation benefit in pregnancy and motherhood in the volume of the difference between the average earnings they received before being transferred to other work and the earning , which they receive in the individual calendar months, after being transferred to other job.

In context with the care for new born child, financial assistance in motherhood, as well, as sickness insurance benefit are provided. It is provided from the first day in the amount of 90% of net daily wage up to 250,- Sk per day. Length of duration of provision of this benefit depends upon the fact, whether it is received by the woman, which gave birth to the child, or another person. Length of provision of financial assistance to employed women, which gave birth to the child, is 28 weeks and to employed women, which are not married, widowed, divorced or living alone for other serious reasons and do not live with a common-law husband, the financial assistance in

motherhood is provided for 37 weeks. Financial assistance in motherhood is granted under specified conditions also to an employed woman, who did not deliver the child, but adopted it for permanent care. Under the same condition is the benefit granted also to an employed man. Length of provision in these cases is 22 or 31 weeks, i.e. in these cases it is shortened by 6 weeks, during which the woman, which delivered the child prematurely, receives the benefit.

To Article 5, letter a) of the Convention:

Traditional opinions on the role of man and woman, especially in family relations, are firmly rooted in the positions and behaviour of Slovak citizens, especially in certain regions and mainly within the middle and older generation. In the course of last two years, several sociological researches were undertaken (e.g. survey of the International Centre for Family Studies „Family, what are you like", „He and she in Slovakia" of Focus agency, UNDP sponsored project „Slovak women in movement" and others). The results of the research had wide publicity and initiate discussion on change of stereotype views on the role of man and woman in family, society and on labour market. The results further showed, that the Slovak women do not feel to be discriminated against, but they require more consequent support in creating equal opportunities in various situations of life, especially in harmonizing the professional and the family role.

To Article 6 of the Convention:

Suppression of all forms of trade with women and exploitation of prostitution of women is regulated by the valid provision of the Penal Code (Act No. 140/1961 Coll.) as amended.

According to the provision of § 246 of the Penal Code, the person who entices, hires or transports a woman into foreign country with the purpose to use her for sexual intercourse with other person, will be punished by imprisonment between 1 and 5 years. The offender will be punished by 3 to 8 years of imprisonment, if he commits the aforementioned crime as a member of an organized group on a woman younger than 18 years or, if he commits such an act with the purpose of using the woman for prostitution. This provision fulfilled the obligation following from the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others of 1949, to which Czechoslovakia acceded on March 14, 1958. The object of this crime are moral principles as well as free decision of woman in sexual relations and sometimes also in her personal freedom. Aforementioned forms of acts do not have to take place against the will of the woman, since she may be enticed by description of easy life abroad, money, etc. According to the Criminal Act, enticement means various means of convincing the woman to leave abroad, for example by attractive promises, money, etc.

The Slovak Republic is currently working intensively on re-codification of the Penal Code.

The conditions of criminal responsibility for trade with women are further extended in the proposed Penal Code. The specter of circumstances, which will be the condition of higher punish-

ment of imprisonment in this crime, is broad, and specifically expresses all important aspects scaling the seriousness of the offender´s act.

According to the provision of § 204 of the Penal Code a person, who induces other person to exercise prostitution, or who profits from prostitution exercised by other person, will be punished by imprisonment up to 3 years for a criminal act - procuring. The offender is punished by 1 to 5 years of imprisonment, if he commits this crime with the use of violence, threat of violence or threat of causing other serious injury, or by misuse of pressure conditions or dependency of other person. The offender will be punished by 2 to 8 years of imprisonment, if he substantially profits from such act, commits such crime as a member of organized group, commits such crime on a person younger than 18 years, or commits such crime abroad. The offender will be punished by 5 to 12 years of imprisonment, if he commits such crime on a person younger than 15 years, or in connection with an organized group active in more countries. According to the Valid Penal Code, we have defined prostitution in connection with the crime of trade with women.

Prostitution itself is not prohibited in our country so far. However, it is in strong contradiction with morals. Profit from prostitution is the criminal act of procuring, according to the valid Penal Code. The proposed draft of new Penal Code in the effort to extend punishment of other forms of exercising procuring and to express the individual activities, based on profit from prostitution, as precisely as possible, creates two principal qualifications connected with the mentioned negative social event - procuring and pandering. According to this proposed provision, criminal offence of procuring is committed by an offender, who, in connection with own business intermediates or enables repeated exercise of prostitution, or under excuse of other business activity, even if partially, intermediates or enables also repeated exercising of prostitution, participating on profits from this activity. It is, in fact, the misuse of otherwise legal conduct of business for exercising of prostitution, often connected with limitation of personal freedom and other violation of individual rights. Criminal offence of pandering is committed by an offender who induces other person to exercise prostitution, or who profits from prostitution exercised by other person. The scope of circumstances, which in connection with these criminal offences, are the condition for use of higher punishment of imprisonment is very broad.

Number of persons sentenced by courts for specific criminal offences:

YEAR								
§	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
§ 204								
Procuring	1	2	0	1	3	4	1	6
§ 241								
Rape	127	133	125	97	76	94	115	68
§ 246								
Trade with women	3	0	3	3	4	4	4	10

Source: Ministry of Justice of Slovakia

Also works in legislative prevention of misuse of women are running fully in compliance with the provision of Article 6 of the Convention. A draft law on regulation of prostitution and suppression of venereal diseases, as a generally binding legislation is under preparation. The Ministry of Interior within its competence approved the document „ Measures in fight against child pornography and sexual misuse of women and children", which is currently introduced into practice. Within institutional conditions, employee posts were reserved at all departments of criminal police, which will be handling criminal activity committed by young people and on young people. All regional directorates of Police Corps (middle level of management) and district directorates of Police Corps (basic level of police management), have reserved posts for officers designated to work on prevention of criminality and other activities against society.

In case of operative interrogation and later investigation (process documentation), in communication with a woman or child, which became a victim of crime, there is maximum effort, that these non-procedural and procedural acts are exercised by a person of the same sex.

Since our legislation does not recognize the term „domestic violence" and such act is not even defined as a criminal offence, from investigation and tactical point of view we can include among criminal offences with the element of „domestic" violence some others, e.g. violation of house freedom, blackmailing, restriction of personal freedom, taking of hostages and oppression, which often chronologically precede „domestic" violence, or are parallel in time and those, which are related to the element of „domestic" violence by their consequences, e.g. health injury, murder, etc.

Special category, which however, is very closely related to the whole issue of „domestic" violence are also violent acts committed on children and youth, eventually such act which can seriously disturb their physical or psychological development. These are namely criminal offences of threat to morals, abandoning of child, negligence of obligatory alimentation, mishandling of entrusted person, endangering of moral education of youth, administration of alcoholic beverages to youth, murder of a new- born child by mother, prohibited interruption of pregnancy, sexual misuse and sexual misuse related to dependency.

Domestic and public violence exercised on women in total, without age differentiation (numbers of criminal offences) in the Slovak Republic in years 1995 - 1997

TYPE OF OFFENCE	DOMEST. VIOL. 1995	PUBLIC VIOL. 1995	DOMEST VIOL. 1996	PUBLIC VIOL. 1996	DOMEST VIOL. 1997	PUBLIC VIOL. 1997
murder	26	13	26	7	25	12
robbery	52	242	50	278	51	291
injury	646	404	647	389	653	346
violence against individual	1040	163	1407	216	1807	220
blackmailing	46	46	56	59	51	50
mishandling of entrusted person	9	0	8	0	2	0

/...

rape	87	107	81	79	87	59
sexual misuse						
in dependency	45	1	31	3	33	4
other sexual misuse	153	63	169	108	147	88
other violent offences	62	47	64	53	60	59
crim. offences in total	2166	1086	2539	1192	2916	1129
% rate	66,6%	33,3%	68,1%	31,9%	71,2%	27,9%

Per cent rate in the last line of the table represents the ratio between the forms of domestic and public violence, as defined by the previous text, in all criminal offences registered by the Police Corps of Slovakia.

Note to table:
The data enabling more serious evaluation of mutual relation between the „domestic" and „public" violence are monitored only since 1995. Despite of that, even from such a short period one can conclude, that there is a strong domination on violence exercised on women, which is hidden from the public. This dangerous phenomenon significantly grew even in the course of such short period. The signal of growing danger can be demonstrated on criminal offence of violence on individual which grew 1.8 fold. This violence, which is often not reported, subsequently results in a health injury and even in the most serious crimes, such as murders. Significant domain of „domestic violence" may be observed, apart from previously mentioned criminal offences, also in crimes of mishandling of entrusted person, which were recorded in this form only and sexual misuse of persons under dependency.

To Article 7 of the Convention:

Total number of female mayors (402) represents 14.8 % of the total number of 2 722 mayors.

To Article 7, letter b) of the Convention:

The Slovak Republic has prepared draft Acts on state service and public service, which fully respect equal opportunities for both women and men.

To Article 7, letter c) of the Convention:

After 1989 the women's movement achieved plurality. Several women organizations had been established. Currently there are approximately 20 NGOs active in woman issues.

CCPW as an advisory, co-ordinating and initiative authority of Government associates, apart from others, non governmental organisations working on woman issues. From their position they

intervene in preparation of legislation and individual regulations related to woman issues, eventually problems of children and families in Slovakia and present and represent their interests.

Since 1997, the Gender Centre, is active in Bratislava as one of the NGOs. Thus a permanent platform had been established for systematic monitoring of problematic areas of life of women, more effective effort to improve the situation in national conditions. The Centre acts as a link between national and international activities in this area.

To Article 8 of the Convention:

There are 51 women represented in the foreign service of the Slovak Republic, eight of whom are chiefs of diplomatic missions of Slovakia. Woman regularly take part, as heads of delegations, or their members, in the sessions of international organizations.

To Article 9 of the Convention:

On November 6, 1997 the Slovak Republic signed the European Convention on Nationality. In accordance with Article 4 of the Convention the States Parties undertake that their rules on nationality shall be based on the principles anchored in the Convention, i.e.: that "*everyone has the right to a nationality, no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her nationality, neither marriage nor the dissolution of a marriage between a national of a State Party and an alien, nor the change of nationality by one of the spouses during marriage, shall automatically affect the nationality of the other spouse*".

To Article 10, letters a, b, c, d, g, h of the Convention:

Act No. 29/1984 Coll. on the system of primary and secondary schools (the School Act), according to subsequent regulations and the Act No. 172/1990 Coll. on universities, according to subsequent regulations, allows for equal treatment and does not permit discrimination against women. Access of all citizens to education in primary and secondary schools and non-discriminative possibility of further education (without setting the quota for sexes) is provided, including post graduate and doctor degree studies.

According to the data on selective monitoring of labour force (4. Quarter 1997), from the total number of economically active population, has 10.7% citizens with university education, i.e. 265.3 thousand persons, from that 4.7% of women, i.e. 117.2 thousand persons, 6% of men, i.e. 148.2 thousand persons.

In the overall educational process in elementary schools are students educated towards respect for human rights without regard to race, sex or religion. Within sexual education, focus is on need of building of partner relations based on equality of sexes and equal position of partners. The focus of education is in subjects like ethical education, civil education and natural science. In the event of suitable topics, it is included also in other teaching subjects, such as technical education and literary education. In physical education, specifics of sexes are respected.

Within education on secondary schools, there are special schools for girls, which prepare the girls in 3 specialist fields. In the school term 1997/98, 65 special schools were established.

In educational process in schools, as well as in non-school education concentrated on marriage and the parenthood, equal status of both sexes is being stressed.

The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 200/1997 Coll. on student loans fund represents the interest of the state in the development of university education and buffers the consequences of ever growing indirect costs for academic education. The student loans funds are able to provide loans for students at universities, which creates conditions to cover student costs for educational purposes, study stays, accessories for studies, literature. The decision making process of providing loans takes into consideration social position of students.

A high percentage of women is represented in the field of teaching profession and relatively low in the field of technical professions.

To Article 10, letter f) of the Convention:

Organization of programs for women and children which left school prematurely, takes place also during serving their sentence in prison. In prisons there exist educational programs for convicted women and girls, who left school prematurely.

To Article 11, letter a) of the Convention:

According to the Article 35 of the Constitution, the citizens have a right to work. The state appropriately provides materially for those citizens who, not due to their fault, cannot exercise this right.

Right to employment is regulated in more detail in the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 387/1966 Coll. on employment according to the Acts of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 70/1997 Coll., No. 354/1997 Coll., No. 366/1997 Coll. and No. 386/1997 Coll.

In order for citizens to exercise their right to employment, the Slovak Republic establishes the conditions through its economical policy, its parts and social policy. According to § 1 of the mentioned law, the goal of employment policy is to provide work for all, who can and want to work and are seeking employment, to enable free choice of employment and obtaining qualification for suitable employment, to provide support of unemployed citizens, who become unemployed not through their own fault adequately and in such a way, which motivates them to seek employment, to provide professional preparation and re-qualification corresponding to the demands of labour market.

Slovakia belongs to the countries with high economical activity of women, as well as among countries with high employment of women.

High degree of participation of women in labour force in changed economical conditions, is probably related to multidimensional factors, such as: traditionally high esteem of labour in value system of women, economical necessity due to the persisting double-income model of family, attitude to labour not only as to source of income but also to the sphere of social contacts and self realization.

In 1996 the country had in average 2 554 400 economically active persons. The women participated on the total number of economically active persons in average by 46.4%, i.e. 1 186 300 persons.

The rate of economical activity of population above 15 years of age (men and women) in average reached in 1996 61.4%, rate of economical activity of men was 68.5%, rate of economical activity of women was 54.8%.

From the total number of economically active population in average, in 1996 the employed represented 89.1%, i.e. 2 276 800 persons. Employed women represented 88.1%. i.e. 1 045 300 people from the number of economically active women. From the number of economically active persons, the unemployed represented 10.9% and unemployed women represented 11.9% from the number of economically active women.

Highest rate of economical activity in longer term development (years 1994-1996) is reached by women in age groups between 35-39 years (92.2% of women within this age group), 40-44 years (89.9%), 30-34 years (89.3%). Significantly high rate of economical activity exists also for women in age groups 45-49 years (85.0%) and 25-29 years (84.6%).

Prevailing majority of women works, similarly to men, in single main employment. In 4th quarter of 1996 35.2 thousand women (105100 men) worked as self-employed. Second employment apart from the primary one was recorded with 10.9 thousand women (20 500 men).

In 1996, 41 300 women and 11 200 men worked part-time, that means that women represented 78.8% of total number of part-time employees. Most frequent reasons for shorter working hours were health reasons (10 700 women and 4 700 men), initiative of the employer (8 700 women and 1700 men), care for children (5 100 women) and also because part-time work is convenient (9 700 women, 2 300 men).

Majority of women works mainly in the processing industry, especially in textile, clothing and food industry, in non-manufacturing sectors, mainly education, health, public administration and commerce. Significant portion of total number of employed is represented by women in the agricultural sector.

To Article 11, letter c) of the Convention:

According to the Article 35 of the Constitution, everyone is entitled to free choice of profession and preparation for it.

From the total number of employees with academic education including higher and bachelor degrees, women represented 44.5%, from total number of employees with secondary education with school-leaving certificate 57.1%, from total number of employees with apprenticeship with school-leaving certificate 35.1%, from number of employees with secondary education without school-leaving certificate 34.5%, from total number of employees with apprenticeship women represented 34.0% and from total number of employees with elementary education women represented 57.5%.

Traditionally high economical activity of women accompanied by the deformed model of female labour force from the past was significantly reflected in forming of so called „female" unemployment. Indexes of rate of women on total number of unemployed in SR since the start of the economical reform (1990) are relatively stable and correspond to high participation of women in labour force. Rate of unemployment of women reached 13.97% (men 12.8%, men and women together 12.96%).

To Article 11, letter d) of the Convention:

Same entitlements are reserved for both men and women by all generally binding legislation in the field of remuneration in public and private sector for work of equal value, for the performance of equal activities.

Average hourly wages of women are behind the average hourly wages of men in average by 22.4%. Difference in wage can be due to different performance or labour quality, this however relates to both, men and women. This difference is mainly due to higher of representation of women in jobs with lower corresponding wage tariffs.

To Article 11, letter e) of the Convention:

In the development of unemployment in 1997, with growing sources of labour force due to the demographic development and decrease of employment and also in relation to maintaining of growth of labour productivity, tendencies of its growth again became apparent, therefore the forecast for 1998 expects slight growth of average unemployment (approx. 13,0%).

According to the preparation of new Labour Code, there is also an ongoing discussion, whether the night work of women should be still prohibited. Both women and men should have the equal possibility in choice of work during the night or day. Current legal provision in allows for night work of women due to specifically stated reasons and there are also other exceptions, which are approved by central authorities after agreement with the central expert authorities and respective employers organizations.

The Slovak Republic will be obliged to comply with the Article 11 of the Convention also through the ratification (now in preparation) of Articles 8 and 17 of European Social Chart, which

guarantee the right of employed women to protection and the right of mother and child to social and economical protection.

Slovakia is obliged to protect women also through the conventions of International Labour Organization (ILO). Item 1 of Article 11 of the Convention is included in the ILO conventions in the following way:

- on equal remuneration of men and women for work of equal value No. 100/1951 Coll. (No. 450/1990 Coll.)
- on discrimination in employment and occupation No. 111/1958 Coll. (No. 456/1990 Coll.)
- on night work of women employed in industry (No. 17/1991 Coll.)
- on employment of women under ground in mines of any type No. 45/1935 Coll. (No.441/1990 Coll.)

To Article 11, letter f) of the Convention:

Right to protection of health and to safe working conditions, including the protection of woman's mission as a mother, is provided for also during the serving of sentence in prison and is regulated by special provision of law of exercising punishment in prison.

In order to increase protection of woman, the re-codification of Criminal Code also includes new definition of criminal offence of sexual misuse of woman other, than by sexual intercourse, committed by the offender who, through violence or immediate threat of violence sexually misuses a woman in other way than by intercourse, or uses her defencelessness to sexually misuse her.

To Article 11, Par. 1, letter d) of the Convention:

Concerning the sphere of remuneration in public and private sector, after 1995 an Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 90/1996 Coll. on minimal wage according to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 366/1997 Coll., was put into force.

As to Article 11, Item 3 of the Convention:

As of January 1• 1997 there is in force an Act of the Slovak National Council No. 387/1996 Coll. on employment, which replaced the Act No. 1/1991 Coll. on employment according to subsequent regulations, Act of the Slovak National Council No. 83/1991 Coll. on competence of authorities in implementation of employment policy according to subsequent regulations and Act of the Slovak National Council No. 10/1993 Coll. on the employment fund of the Slovak Republic. The adoption of new Act on employment was required by the development on the labour market and the general development of market conditions in the period 1991-1996.

To Article 12, Item 1 of the Convention:

It is already provided by Article 40 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to availability of medical care according to law for all, disregarding to sex. Obligatory health insurance provides to all a free access to the necessary health care, where the insurance for economically non-active citizens is paid for by the state. The elementary health care is provided to everybody by physicians of primary medical care. The women use the services of gynecologists of primary medical care in issues of reproduction health, family planing, care in pregnancy and in post-delivery period. In case of need everybody uses the services of special care of a physician or hospital care.

To Article 12, Item 2 of the Convention:

Absolute majority of deliveries takes place in hospitals with the assistance of trained experts. During all the period of pregnancy the woman can use assistance and advice from the gynecologist within dispensary care. Complex health care includes also oncological prevention and the prevention of sexually infectious diseases. In family planning issues, the woman has free access to contraceptives, eventually to abortion and vice versa to IVF. Numbers of abortions have declining tendency.

To the Article 13 of the Convention:

Institute of child benefits as a state social benefit is provided by law as of September 1st, 1994 by the Act No. 193/1994 Coll. on child benefits and additional contribution to child benefits according to the provisions of the Act of the Slovak National Council No. 134/1995 Coll. According to this Act the state guarantees payment of child contribution to each applicant in case of fulfilling of legal conditions for entitlement to child benefits.

One of the conditions for entitlement to child benefits is the permanent residence of the applicant for child benefits, as well as a dependent child, for which the entitlement to child benefits is applied, on territory of Slovakia. If the applicant is an alien, in the date of evaluation of entitlement to child benefits, he has to have permanent residence on territory of Slovakia in duration of minimum 1 year. Duration of 1 year of permanent residence is not required from those aliens, who have permanent residence in the country and were granted a „refugee status"in Slovakia. Application of condition of permanent residence according to the citizens of EU member countries employed in Slovakia means, that they can fulfill the given condition to claim the child benefits only when they have permanent residence in Slovakia of minimum 1 year at the date of assessment of this claim. In case, that the applicant for child benefits permanently residing in Slovakia, or such a beneficiary, provisionally resides abroad longer than one year, or if dependant child entitled to the benefit, resides abroad for period longer than 1 year, they are not entitled to the benefit.

Further legal condition to claim child benefits according to the mentioned law is the assessment of income of parents or spouses and their dependant children (persons assessed together) for the previous calendar year in relation to 1.5, eventually 2-fold of minimum support of jointly evaluated persons. If the jointly evaluated person had income in foreign currency, such an income is

for the purposes of child benefits transferred to domestic currency according to the exchange rates of National Bank of Slovakia valid on the last date of respective calendar months.

Conditions for entitlement to child benefits, according to current legislation in force concerning child benefits, are the same for all applicants on all territory of Slovakia, without regard to their citizenship, where no exceptions are permissible.

To Article 16, Par. 1 of the Convention:

Together with the transformation of social security system, the Government accepted a new concept of state family policy.

Basic strategic goals of state family policy are:

- achievement of relative economical independence of families as the basis for their civil independence and utilization of their responsibility and choice of own future;
- success of families in implementation of their functions;
- stability and social quality of spouse and parent relations as to equal rights and common division of family roles;
- establishment of optimal conditions for self-reproduction of the society;
- accepting of such measures, which enable consequent implementation of principle of choice or acceptability in the decision of parent for parental or work role.

State family policy in application of subsidiarity principle represents the responsibility of state in establishment of framework economical, tax related, legislative and social conditions for families, so that they are able within their scope to realize their responsibility for themselves and their members and for the choice of own life strategies and preferences.

Family is also the most significant recipient of state social support and social assistance. The state and other entities will , in focused way, provide support to families with children and to childless families in certain life situation, specified by the state, in order to prevent any adverse decrease of living standard of a citizen or family, in accordance with the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The principle of equal position of man and woman in all family relations is consequently regulated by the Family Act (No.94/1963 Coll., as amended):

Right to enter marriage is the same for both women and men. First of all, the person who wishes to enter marriage has to be of lawful age, i.e. 18 years.

For entering into marriage it is crucial, that marriage is entered into according to voluntary decision of man and woman, that they want to become husband and wife (§1 of aforementioned law), without regard to race, nationality, religion etc.) In case of entering into marriage with an alien, here are in force provisions of § 19 and 20 of Act No. 97/1963 Coll. on private and procedural

international law according to the subsequent regulations, i.e. that qualification of person to enter marriage, as well as the conditions of its validity are administered by the law of the state of citizenship of the respective person and the form of solemnization of marriage by the legislation of the state where the marriage is solemnized.

According to § 4 of Family Act marriage is solemnized by approving statement of man and woman before a state authority. Or authority of registered church, or religious society on their joint entry into marriage. Disregarding the authority which solemnizes the marriage, it is always recorded in the book of marriages (registry) managed by state authority (currently the District Office).

The man and woman in marriage have equal rights and obligations including the right to choose the family name, which they will use after entering marriage (§8 of the quoted law). Our law does not permit superiority of man to woman, nor in the mutual relation between spouses. The rights and obligations of spouses are established by entering into marriage and cease only after cessation of marriage.

To Article 16, Par. 2 of the Convention:

This provision is included in § 13 of Family Act. Marriage cannot be entered into by a minor, i.e. person, who did not reach the age of 18 years. Exceptionally, if in accordance with the social purpose of marriage, the court may allow to a minor older than 16 years, to enter marriage. Minor under 16 years cannot enter into a marriage.